

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/774,009

Examiner

Tho D. Ta

Applicant(s)

TAKADA ET AL.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to interview summary dated 6/17/04.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-10.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 06 February 2004 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 2/6/04
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Gerald E. Hespos on 06/17/04.

2. The application has been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A connector [(10)], comprising:

an engageable element [(11; 60)] that is fittable into a receptacle [(53)] on a mating connector [(50)] and into which at least one terminal fitting [(62)] is mountable, and a retainer [(34)] mountable into an accommodating portion [(22)], wherein:

the retainer [(34)] and the engageable element [(11; 60)] are configured for insertion into the receptacle [(53)] when the retainer [(34)] is accommodated properly in the accommodating portion [(22)], whereas the retainer [(34)] contacts an opening edge [(57B)] of the receptacle [(53)] when the retainer [(34)] is left improperly inserted into the accommodating portion [(22)], and

the retainer [(34)] includes at least one guide [(38)] with a slanted surface [(38A)] aligned for sliding contact with the opening edge [(57B)] of the receptacle

[(53)] to guide the retainer [(34)] into the accommodating portion [(22)] during insertion into the receptacle [(53)], and at least one restriction [(39)] formed with a wall [(39A)] to substantially face an opening-end surface [(57A)] of the receptacle [(53)].

2. (Amended) The connector of claim 1, wherein the wall [(39A)] is formed between a starting end [(a)] and a terminus end [(b)] of the slanted surface [(38A)] with respect to the fitting direction [(FD)] of the engageable element [(11; 60)] and inwardly from the slanted surfaces [(38A)].

3. (Amended) The connector of claim 1, wherein the vertical wall [(39A)] prevents the fitting operation by contacting the opening-end surface [(57A)] of the receptacle [(53)] when the guide [(38)] is squashed during the fitting operation into the receptacle [(53)].

4. (Amended) The connector of claim 1, wherein the accommodating portion [(22)] is formed by recessing a side surface of the engageable element [(11; 60)].

5. (Amended) The connector of claim 1, wherein the engageable element [(11; 60)] includes a plurality of auxiliary connectors [(60)] and a holder

[(11)] into which the auxiliary connectors [(60)] are mountable and in one side surface of which the accommodating portion [(22)] is formed.

6. (Amended) The connector of claim 5, wherein the retainer [(34)] has guiding walls [(36)] at opposite widthwise sides of a main portion [(35)] thereof for sliding contact with side surfaces [(14)] of the holder [(11)], the retainer [(34)] having a U-shape and crossing over the holder [(11)] so that the retainer [(34)] locks the auxiliary connectors [(60)] inserted to a proper depth in the holder [(11)] when the retainer [(34)] is properly accommodated into the accommodating portion [(22)].

7. (Amended) The connector of claim 6, each guiding wall [(36)] has an extending portion [(37)] extending toward the receptacle [(53)] and projecting outward from the accommodating portion [(22)] with the retainer [(34)] left only partly inserted, and the guiding portion [(38)] is formed on the extending portion [(37)].

8. (Amended) The connector of claim 7, wherein at least one guiding groove [(56)] is formed in an inner surface of the receptacle [(53)] of the mating connector [(50)] and extends substantially in the fitting direction [(56)], at least one guiding rib [(27)] projecting from a side surface of the holder [(11)] for engagement with guiding groove [(56)].

9. (Amended) The connector of claim 8, wherein the retainer [(34)] locks the auxiliary connectors [(60)] inserted to a proper depth in the holder [(11)] when the retainer [(34)] is accommodated properly into the accommodating portion [(22)], and at least one protruding piece [(35C)] on an outer surface of the retainer [(34)] as to become substantially flush with the guiding rib [(27)], the guiding portion [(38)] being formed at a leading end of the protruding piece [(35C)] with respect to the fitting direction [(FD)].

10. (Amended) A connector assembly comprising the connector [(10)] of claim 1 and a mating connector [(50)] connectable therewith.

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art fails to provide, teach or suggest the retainer includes at least one guide with a slanted surface aligned for sliding contact with the opening edge of the receptacle to guide the retainer into the accommodating portion during insertion into the receptacle, and at least one restriction formed with a wall to substantially face an opening-end surface of the receptacle.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably

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accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tho D. Ta whose telephone number is (571) 272-2014. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:00-5:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paula A. Bradley can be reached on (571) 272-2800 ext 33. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

tdt
06/16/04


THO D. TA
PRIMARY EXAMINER